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SECRET SPECIFIC REQUEST FOR INFORMATION 18 September 1956

002387/H4D Reply due on or before 1 April 1957 Op 922H2F

Subject: Information on crew of downed P4M-1Q

From: Chief of Naval Operations
To: DISTRIBUTION LIST

Ref: (a) COMFEAF message 050349Z of September 1956 readdressed as CINCPAC 052003Z (NOTAL)

Encl: (1) Identifying Data on Missing Crew Members of the Navy P4M-1Q aircraft which crashed on 22 August 1956 in the East China Sea

1. At about 1625 Z, 22 August 1956, a Navy P4M-1Q (MERCATOR) aircraft, commanded by ICDR Milton HUTCHINSON and attached to ECMRON ONE, was attacked by unidentified aircraft and crashed in the East China Sea off Chousan Island at about lat. 30-23N, long. 123-03E. Search operations conducted by U.S. Navy forces resulted in the recovery of two bodies, ICDR James W. PONSFORD and Albert F. MATTIN, AT1. Reference (a) indicates that the Chinese Communists rescued two survivors of the aircraft on 23 August and took them to a hospital in the Cheng-hai area where one of them died. On 3 September the British reported that the Chinese Communists had recovered the body of William F. HASKINS, AT1. On 11 September the British reported that the Chinese Communists had recovered the body of Jack A. CURTIS, AT3, on 4 September. Identifying data on those members of the crew who are still missing is contained in enclosure (1). Additional photographs will be forwarded when available.

2. Addressees are provided the above background in order that they can exert every effort to obtain the following information:

a. Are the Chinese Communists holding any members of the crew of the downed aircraft?

b. If so, who is being held and where are they being held?

3. Reporting in response to this request should be regarded as a matter of priority, utilizing naval message with amplifying IR's if indicated.

W. H. PACKARD
By direction

15 July 1977

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